From: ckelley@cambridgema.gov
To: Ellen Leopold
Subject: Re: Cambridge City Council and the Israel BDS movement
Date: Saturday, April 21, 2018 2:59:37 PM

Ellen:

I do nor know that it was ever scheduled.

Best,

Craig

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On Apr 21, 2018, at 1:48 PM, Ellen Leopold <eleopold@comcast.net> wrote:

> Hi Craig,
>
> I don't know why the HP debate scheduled for Monday has been cancelled but I can't help suspecting some kind of interference from the anti-BDS crowd. I say this because I received a flyer yesterday that may well have gone out to every voter in Cambridge. I'm guessing you received one too. It's from an org based in Los Angeles, called Israeli-American Coalition for Action, a group I had never heard of until yesterday but, after some sleuthing on line, I now see that this coalition was one of the supporters of the anti-BDS bill that recently failed to make it through the MA legislature, opposed by the ACLU as well as by various other groups.
>
> As you might've seen, the flyer includes some scary and totally dishonest rhetoric, claiming that the BDS movement is "deeply rooted in anti-semitism, targets the Jewish state of Israel" and brings "ever more hateful rhetoric into this country." Perhaps even more offensive, it pretends to be expressing a local concern, asking recipients to "Contact OUR city council now and tell them to reject hate in Cambridge." I cannot believe any of this originated in Cambridge.
>
> I hope you will contribute to whatever efforts are underway to re-schedule the BDS debate.
>
> Thanks,
> Ellen
>
> **From:** Kelley, Craig
> **Sent:** Monday, April 16, 2018 11:17 AM
> **To:** Ellen Leopold
> **Subject:** RE: Cambridge City Council and the Israel BDS movement

I hope the conversation will be productive as well, Ellen. Which probably means a lot more discussion in Committee to discuss how Cambridge wants to engage in this sort of thing. Council meetings themselves are generally pretty tough places to have meaningful dialogue and Monday promises to be a douzy (though I haven't seen the agenda yet- it'll get posted Thursday evening).

Best,

Craig

From: Ellen Leopold [mailto:eleopold@comcast.net]
Sent: Monday, April 16, 2018 11:13 AM
To: Kelley, Craig <ckelley@cambridgema.gov>
Subject: Re: Cambridge City Council and the Israel BDS movement

Dear Craig,

Thanks for getting back to me and thanks for your willingness to learn more about the BDS movement. That's great!

To that end, let me assure you that the BDS campaign has nothing to do with de-legitimizing Israel although its opponents want you to think it does—and they have a great deal of money available to persuade you, to convince you that any criticism of Israel is a form of anti-semitism! This is just not true, however many times they say it. The BDS campaign is about political injustice. The West Bank settlements are illegal. It follows that the use of HP's high-tech (biometric) ID cards to maintain "security" at checkpoints between the West Bank and Israel is essentially collusion with an occupation that has been internationally condemned. I cannot imagine that this is something the Council wants to be a part of!

As for singling Israel out, you may recall that this is not an argument that was ever brought to bear against anti-apartheid campaigns against the regime in South Africa, supported by local councils in the US, when there were plenty of other justifiable targets for boycotts. On the other hand, I might argue that there are legitimate reasons for Americans to treat Israel differently from other nations violating international law. In 2016, the US and Israel signed a military-assistance deal, at $38 billion, the biggest such pledge in US history. Israel has, in fact, according to the Congressional Research Service, been "the largest cumulative recipient of US foreign assistance since World War II." Surely this entitles—no, requires—us to hold the country accountable for the way this money is spent!

I hope the Council's discussion of this subject will be a productive one and look forward to hearing more about it.

Again, I want to thank you again for your interest.

Best,

Ellen

From: Kelley, Craig
Sent: Monday, April 16, 2018 7:51 AM
To: Ellen Leopold
Subject: Cambridge City Council and the Israel BDS movement

Thanks for your note, Ellen.

I know next to nothing about this except that I am being bombarded with emails from people who seem to know more and I found a flyer at the Kennedy School last week. I am meeting with pro and con folks next week and the week after to learn more.

Not having seen the resolution, which won't be officially posted until the Thursday before the Council meeting, I cannot say anything with surety except that I will not support an attempt to delegitimize Israel although I could be supportive of something that expresses concerns over some of Israel's policies without singling them out as the only nation in the world with problematic policies.

I also think this is a lousy way to manipulate local government. If we want to take stances on good and bad in the world, and arguably we should, it only seems fair that we do so via some agreed upon criteria that does not single out specific entities for the sake of political expedience.

But like I said, I actually have not seen anything for the Council yet so my opinion is not well informed.

Craig